Amendments to the Specification

Please replace the Abstract of the Disclosure with the following:

A decoding system and method for providing relatively high likelihood of obtaining at least two paths of getting to each decoding state from at least three paths. The system and method also selects a maximum likelihood path from the two paths, where a log likelihood of getting to a state in the decoder is determined by a soft-input value encoded with a trellis so as to provide at least three paths for getting to the state.

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